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THE FOUNDING OF THE
BERKSHIRE DISTRICT MEDICAL SOCIETY

WITH NOTES ON THE FIRST PERIOD OF THE EXIST-
ENCE OF THE MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY

BY

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THE FOUNDING OF THE BERKSHIRE DISTRICT MEDICAL SOCIETY, WITH NOTES ON THE FIRST PERIOD OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY.*

BY WALTER L. BURRAGE, M.D., BOSTON.

At the one hundred and tenth anniversary of the founding of the Berkshire District Medical Society, one of the oldest component units of the Massachusetts Medical Society, it is fitting that we search the records of the past to learn how the organization of such a strong and enduring society came about, and something as to the character and achievements of the founders, those hardy idealistic pioneers who could truly say, "We look to the hills, whence cometh our strength."

We find in the old minutes of the council of the Massachusetts Medical Society the following entry: "At a meeting of the Counsellors holden at Vila's Hotel, Boston, on Wednesday, the 7 day of October, 1807, a petition was received from certain members of the Society in the county of Berkshire, asking leave to establish a district society in that county, to comprehend all the towns in that county. *Voted*, That the prayer of the said petitioners be granted." Curiosity is aroused at once to learn who were the "certain members," and reference to the

* Read at a meeting of the Berkshire District Medical Society in Pittsfield, Mass., Aug. 30, 1917.

Charter Book, so called, in which besides the original charter of the society were entered the names of all new fellows, reveals the following list of eight men from Berkshire County in the order in which they became fellows:

- 1785 Erastus Sergeant, Stockbridge.
- 1801 Hugo Burghardt, Richmond.
- 1803 Timothy Childs, Pittsfield.
- 1803 Remembrance Sheldon, Williamstown.
- 1803 Eldad Lewis, Lenox.
- 1803 Oliver Brewster, Becket.
- 1804 William Buel, Sheffield.
- 1804 Horatio Jones, Stockbridge.

These comprised all the fellows in Berkshire at that time, William Whiting of Great Barrington, first president of a "Medical Association" in Berkshire in 1787 and one of the thirty-one incorporators of the Massachusetts Medical Society in 1781, had died in 1792, and Oliver Partridge of Stockbridge, who had joined the society in 1785 and had been secretary of the above-mentioned association, had resigned on the reorganization of the parent society in 1803. Thus we see that six of the original ten fellows of the society previous to the year 1807, had joined after the passage of the act of the legislature amending the charter.

The records tell us that forty councilors were appointed by the society June 1, 1803, and that Berkshire was allotted one, Erastus Sergeant. The next year the number of councilors was increased to forty-four, and Berkshire was represented by Erastus Sergeant, leading surgeon of Stockbridge, and Timothy Childs, chief practitioner of Pittsfield, and these same men represented the district in 1806, the year before the foundation of the district society.

Twenty years earlier, a medical association, the precursor of the Berkshire Medical Society, had been organized at Stockbridge, following a vote of the Massachusetts Medical Society at its October meeting, 1785, appointing Dr. Sergeant and Dr. Partridge a committee for Berkshire "for the purpose of encouraging the communication of all important or extraordinary cases that may occur in the practice of the Medical Art, and for this purpose to meet, correspond and communicate with any individuals or any Association of Physicians that have been or may be formed in their respective counties and make a report from time to time of their doings to this society as occasion may require." Fifteen physicians attended the first meeting of this medical association at Stockbridge, January 16, 1787, among them besides Dr. Sergeant and Dr. Partridge, being William Whiting, Oliver Brewster and Eldad Lewis. According to their minutes, they met "to form an association for the purpose of observing and communicating those things which may be for the improvement of the art of physick, and of encouraging a spirit of union with those of the Faculty, and of rendering the Faculty more respectable." What a vogue the word "respectable" had in those days! No one was properly born unless of "respectable parents."

William Whiting was the first president; Oliver Partridge, secretary; and Eldad Lewis, orator. There can be no question of the high purpose of those founders and that they were accustomed and ready to overcome obstacles of climate and difficult transit facilities—there were no railways, few roads and many paths—in order to hold their meetings and to advance the standards of the practice of medicine. The

second meeting was held in May with an attendance of seven, and the third in June, fourteen being present, and Timothy Childs was one. To show the aims of the founders and to bring home to us the oratory of the time it may not be out of place to cite a few extracts from Eldad Lewis' oration on "The Usefulness of Medical Societies," delivered before the fourteen members of the Medical Association of the County of Berkshire, gathered at Mr. Bingham's in Stockbridge on that twelfth of June, 1787, and carefully recorded by vote in the old record book of the society wherein all the minutes were entered from 1787 to 1864. This book is the source of our information concerning the Berkshire society and is now in the possession of the Berkshire Athenaeum in Pittsfield.

After lamenting the lack of medical schools, hospitals and opportunities to study medicine in this country, Dr. Lewis says: "A society of physicians united upon liberal principles offers a fine opportunity for improvement from the communications of the several members; important incidents occurring in private practice will by this means be rescued from oblivion, talents will be stimulated to exercise, which otherwise might forever have lain dormant and useless, or there will be the greatest and most noble excitements to a laudable emulation and industry. Opportunities also will often present of habituating ourselves to observe accurately, to think justly, to reason truly and analogically and judge with precision." And again: "The natural history of our country is a subject that has been but little cultivated hitherto, for which reason, as well as from its extensive usefulness, it demands our highest attention. Intimately connected with which and more directly

subservient to the Profession are the botany and pharmaceutica of indigenous vegetables. No part of the world is more fertile in efficacious drugs than the territory of the United States; to many of these the physicians of other countries are entire strangers, while we ourselves are shamefully ignorant in these matters."

Dr. Lewis hoped that the "association" might control the quacks, at that time a great menace to the community. He said: "It will undoubtedly be in our power, when properly organized, to hinder the illiterate medicaster and ignorant quacks from introducing themselves into the practice, to the danger of the lives of the sick and the injury of the deserving physician." This excellent oration closed with a plea to the members to elevate the pharmaceutical standards of the druggists and to stand together for the public good, to concur in all measures calculated to abolish all odious distinctions and ill-natured competitions among the faculty and to cultivate confidence and harmony in the profession.

The Berkshire Medical Association met again in January, 1788, and admitted five new members, but because of the rebellion led by Daniel Shays and the troubled state of the country there were no further meetings until 1794. In that year, on November 12, fifteen members met at Stockbridge, officers were elected and three censors were chosen. At another meeting, January 6, 1795, the by-laws were revised and signed by fifteen members, including Erastus Sergeant, Eldad Lewis, Oliver Partridge, Horatio Jones, Oliver Brewster, Hugo Burghardt and William Buel. There were two more meetings in this year and two in 1796; then follows

a great silence, and the next record is "Lenox, July 1, 1819," thirteen years later. There are no records at all of meetings held in 1807 and in the succeeding years. Search through the records of the council of the parent society from 1807 to 1819 shows that new fellows residing in Berkshire were admitted from time to time, but there is no specific reference to the district until February 4, 1818, when this entry occurs: "A petition having been presented by Hugo Burghardt and others, Fellows of this Society residing in the County of Berkshire, requesting permission to constitute a district society by the name of the Berkshire District Medical Society, and to hold their meetings in the town of Lenox. *Voted*, That the prayer of the said petition be granted." Thus the Berkshire society was born again, and regular meetings have been held and regular records kept since July 1, 1819.

At first the society voted not to accept the charter as granted by the parent society, but at a meeting held May 4, 1820, the charter was adopted. Previously a special committee of the Council of the Massachusetts Medical Society had been appointed, on application from the Berkshire society, to consider whether that society might be granted allowance from their membership fees to defray their expenses. The committee reported to the annual meeting of the Society in Boston, June 3, 1818, recommending that the treasurer of the Berkshire District Medical Society be empowered to collect all membership dues for his district for five years and to return half of the amount collected to the treasurer of the state society. The report was adopted in spite of the fact that two similar requests from the Worcester district society,

1808 and 1816, had been denied by the Council, and the concession must have been of assistance.

In 1821 the Berkshire society was well re-established, every subsequent meeting was duly recorded and the by-laws were revised and signed September 13, by the following twenty-seven members, who may be regarded as the founders of the present régime:

Asa G. Welch	Philander H. Thomas
Henry H. Childs	Henry L. Sabin
Worham L. Fitch	Hubbard Bartlett
John L. Barker	Millen Sabin
Platt B. Tyler	Erastus Sergeant
Hugo Burghardt	Luke Dewey
Eben Emmons	Asa Burbank
Robert Worthington	Vassel White
Daniel Collins	William H. Tyler
George Hill	Charles Worthington
Alfred Perry	Abner Sears
Enoch Peirce	Lyndon A. Smith
Selden Jennings	Royal Fowler
Coridon Guiteau	

In this manner came about a third founding of the society,—the first in 1787, the second in 1807, and the last in 1818-20. Under the auspices of the society the Berkshire Medical Institution was to start within three years (1823) on its long and honorable career in Pittsfield.

In the year 1807 the Massachusetts Medical Society had 160 active and retired fellows. At this time the relatively populous Worcester and Essex Southern districts had in their membership 22 and 20 fellows, respectively. They had been organized in 1804, and were the only district societies formed previous to the Berkshire society.

It may help to an understanding of the situa-

tion in 1807 to sketch the conditions under which the parent society had sprung to life under the charter that was approved by the governor, November 1, 1781, just after the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, October 19, of the same year, and to trace the progress of the society from that time to the year that now engages our attention.

The War of the Revolution was over, although the country was to be in a disturbed state until the signing of the treaty of peace in 1783. Many physicians had returned from a military experience, having been brought into touch with new and larger ideas, and there was a feeling that the profession of the country should take its place on a higher plane with the medical men of European countries. The pioneer medical society of the United States, that of New Jersey, founded in 1766, now renewed its meetings that had been suspended from November, 1775, to November, 1781, because of the war which had been waged largely in the territory of that state. The constitution of Massachusetts had been adopted a year before and the first session of the legislature was held October 25, 1780. The founding of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Boston in the latter year, on the general plan of the Royal Society of London, may be considered to have had something to do with the organization of the Massachusetts Medical Society in 1781, for Edward Augustus Holyoke, first president of the medical society, Cotton Tufts, chief promoter and president for eight years, and six others were incorporators of both societies, the by-laws of which have many points of similarity. Moreover, John Warren, one of the incorporators of the Massachusetts Medical Society and its president for eleven

years, became a fellow of the academy in August, 1781, not long before the Massachusetts Medical Society started on its long and honorable career. Altogether, eighteen of the early members of the medical society had membership also in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences previous to the adoption of the reorganizing act of the legislature in 1803.

Of the thirty-one incorporators of the Massachusetts Medical Society, five were trained in statesmanship, namely, Cotton Tufts, Samuel Holten, John Frink, Sr., William Baylies and Oliver Prescott; three had foreign training: Thomas Kast, James Lloyd and John Barnard Swett; three were scholars: Isaac Rand, Sr., Isaac Rand, Jr., and Joseph Orne; and four had had military training: John Warren, John Barnard Swett, Oliver Prescott and Thomas Welsh. The rest were practitioners from different parts of the state, William Whiting being the only one from the extreme western part, although Giles Crouch Kellogg represented Hadley, and Ebenezer Hunt, Northampton.

Under the original charter of 1781 the number of fellows was limited to seventy. The objects of the society were to effect a system of adequate and uniform medical education, and to elevate the standard of professional intercourse among practitioners; power was granted to examine and give letters testimonial to approbated candidates for the practice of physic and surgery (early phraseology); fellows and officers were elected by the society itself, and meetings were held in April, June and October, and oftener by adjournment. This was in the first period of the society's existence—twenty years. Josiah Bartlett says in his annual discourse in 1810: "Vacancies by death or other causes were

filled with senior practitioners, in the respective districts, till the law of 1803." Because of the small membership scattered over a large territory, the society took on a character of exclusiveness and, as time went on, it became increasingly difficult to obtain a quorum at the meetings, and penalties for non-attendance proved of no avail in producing the required numbers. It needed to be made democratic, and this came about at last in 1803.

During the first ten years of its life, the society owed much to its secretary, Nathaniel Walker Appleton, a pupil of E. A. Holyoke, the first president. Appleton, of Boston, was constant in his attendance at all meetings of the society and council. His records, which were written in excellent chirography with nut-gall ink on rag paper—a rare commodity today—are as legible as they were when inscribed one hundred and thirty years ago. He posted up the Charter Book and attended to a very considerable correspondence, as attested by the minutes and by the letters that have been preserved. Failing health compelled his resignation in 1793, and he died in Ohio two years later, at the early age of 43. When he and Cotton Tufts ceased their labors for the society, after 1795, a period of decadence began. Dr. Holyoke, because of living in Salem, seventeen miles away from the capital where the meetings were of necessity held, was able to be present very seldom, and the second president, William Kneeland, attended only one meeting during his two-year term of service, the vice-presidents, Dr. Pecker and Dr. Tufts, presiding in his absence.

Cotton Tufts, vice-president 1785-1787 and president 1787-1795, was most punctilious in his attendance, coming twelve miles regularly from

his home in Weymouth to attend the double meetings—a morning meeting that was adjourned to the afternoon. He reported cases and read papers, and it was during his incumbency that the first volume of medical papers was published, 1790. From the first meeting of the society, July 18, 1782, through his term as president in 1795, thirteen years, first as counselor, then as vice-president, and finally as president Dr. Tufts was absent from only two of the forty meetings of the council held during that time. What a record of fidelity! From papers that have been handed down in the families of his descendants it would appear that he called the first meetings for the organization of the society, and an early draft of the by-laws is in his precise and very legible handwriting.

From 1796 on the meetings were poorly attended; in 1800 the treasurer was instructed not to call upon any fellow for an assessment from June, 1794, to 1800, and in 1802 the first steps were taken looking toward a reorganization. A committee reported January 19, 1803, recommending, "That the society apply to the General Court at their present session that the limitation of the number of the society be removed, and for an extension of its power and privileges." John Dexter Treadwell of Salem, another pupil of Dr. Holyoke, seems to have had a good deal to do with the reorganization, judging by a vote passed by the society, June 6, 1833, on the news of his death.

The society is living today under the slightly modified act of March 8, 1803, which removed the restriction as to the number of fellows, placed the election of the officers in the hands of the council, who held three stated meetings a year and appointed five censors to examine can-

didates for practice, in the state at large. At this time the councilors were elected by the society, and it was obliged to issue certificates under penalty of a fine. At once the society began to grow. The Charter Book shows a long list of new fellows in 1803 and the succeeding years, and we have noted already that there were 160 fellows in 1807. The meetings of the council were well attended; amendments to the by-laws—a sure sign of progress—were offered each year, and all signs indicated the beginning of that vigorous life which has carried the society through the succeeding century. During the first period the society had friction with Harvard College in the matter of the authority to license practitioners of medicine, and this matter was finally adjusted amicably in 1794. The first annual dinner was given in 1796. Letters preserved in the society's safe show that touch was kept with the other medical societies, notably the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, 1791-92; Medical Society of New Haven, Connecticut, 1791; Medical Society of London, England, 1792; and the New Jersey Medical Society, which, after correspondence with the Massachusetts Medical Society in 1788 finally obtained, in 1790, a charter from the New Jersey legislature for a period of twenty-five years. New Jersey suspended its meetings again, from 1795 to 1807, and after that has held regular annual meetings.

One of the features of the act of 1803 was that upon application of any five members to the council that body might establish district societies. In the minutes of the meeting of the council held February 2, 1804, we find this entry: "That the petition for a District Society (presented October 3, 1803) in the town of Boston, to include Roxbury, Charlestown & Cambridge,

be granted, but the chairman of said petitioners (Aaron Dexter) be requested to state by next meeting of council the members said society will compose." As there is no further entry on this subject it is obvious that the project fell through, for the Suffolk District Medical Society was not organized until 1849. District societies were authorized and established in Worcester and in Essex Southern, both on the same day, June 7, 1804. On October 4, in the same year, a petition for a district society in Lincoln and Cumberland, Maine, was granted, Maine being then a part of Massachusetts; but nothing came of this, and the same was true of a petition of James Mann of Wrentham and others, June 5, 1806, to form a district society in Norfolk. It may not be out of place to state here that after the formation of the Berkshire society, the next year, no other district societies were organized until Hampshire formed its society in 1831.

One advantage of a district society was that such a society had a special board of five censors, appointed by the council, to examine candidates for the practice of medicine, and another was that it could appoint its own officers and make its own regulations, provided they were not in conflict with the by-laws of the general society. The members were required to report to the council "all such cases as may be selected for their importance and utility."

The Pharmacopoeia of the Massachusetts Medical Society was ordered printed in 1807, under the editorship of John Collins Warren and James Jackson, and apothecaries throughout the state were asked to adopt it and committees were appointed to make inquiries as to its working. This was the first publication of its kind in the country. John Warren was president of

the society and his son, John Collins, secretary; an oration had been given each year since 1804; the annual assessment had been raised from \$1 to \$2, and the by-laws had been revised in 1806. Indications were many that the society was progressing when the petition for the formation of a district society in Berkshire received the favorable action of the Council October 7, 1807.

Whether all eight of the Berkshire fellows signed the petition we do not know, but there can be no question that there were able men at the helm, men who were to uphold high standards in the profession and pass on to their successors the torch that was to kindle the fire of medical education in the Berkshire Medical Institution and keep it alight for over forty years. Erastus Sergeant and Timothy Childs represented Berkshire as councilors when the petition was acted on and for several years after. Let us sketch briefly the lives of the founders, getting many of our facts from Dr. Abner Marshall Smith's "Medicine in Berkshire," published in *The Book of Berkshire*, Pittsfield, 1890.

Timothy Childs, father of Henry Halsey Childs, organizer of the Berkshire Medical Institution, was born at Deerfield in February, 1748. He entered Harvard College in 1764, but was forced to leave at the close of his junior year because of lack of funds. From Cambridge he returned to Deerfield and studied medicine with Dr. Thomas Williams, removing to practise at Pittsfield at the age of twenty-three. In 1774 Dr. Childs was appointed chairman of a committee to draft a petition to His Majesty's Justices of Common Pleas in the county of Berkshire, remonstrating against certain acts of Parliament which had just been promulgated, and in the same year took a commission as lieutenant

in a company of minute men. On the news of the battle of Lexington he marched to Boston with his company. Being appointed surgeon of Colonel Patterson's regiment, Dr. Childs accompanied the regiment to New York and to Montreal, returning to the practice of medicine in Pittsfield in 1777. He introduced the practice of inoculation in that town and later, with the assistance of his son, substituted for it vaccination, against strenuous protest. Evidently he was a man of affairs and had interests outside the daily routine practice of his art, for he was elected representative to the General Court in 1792 and later was senator and a member of the executive council. Harvard College conferred on him the honorary degree of M.D. in 1811, he was a councilor of the Massachusetts Medical Society until his death, and, on the organization of the Berkshire District Medical Society he was appointed a censor and was elected its first president. For thirty years Dr. Childs was the leading physician of Pittsfield and was called as a consultant in the neighboring towns, keeping up his activity until a week before his death at the age of seventy-three, in the town of his adoption, February 25, 1821.

The office of censor, to which Dr. Childs had been appointed by the council, was no sinecure in those days. The Puritanical notion that duties must not be evaded was in force. Listen to this extract from Chapter V, Section 2, of the by-laws of 1806, as printed at Salem by Joshua Cushing: "The District Censors shall meet at such times and places as the Counsellors may direct, and no member of a district society shall be exempted from sustaining the office of a censor for the district wherein he resides; and in

case anyone, appointed to the aforesaid office, shall *unreasonably* neglect or refuse to perform the duties thereof, he shall forfeit and pay, to the treasurer of the general society, for every such neglect or refusal, the sum of ten dollars." Contrast this with the provisions of our by-laws today, under which the censors and district secretaries are paid from the funds of the general society three dollars for each applicant examined, and each supervisor receives mileage.

The other councilor at the time of the founding of the Berkshire society was Erastus Sergeant of Stockbridge. He was the chief surgeon for the county before the advent of Josiah Goodhue. The son of the Rev. John Sergeant, first minister of Stockbridge, he was born in that town, August 7, 1742. He spent two years at Princeton College, studied medicine with his uncle, the famous Dr. Thomas Williams of Deerfield, and on the opening of the Revolution was major in the 7th Berkshire regiment, serving at Lake Champlain from December, 1776, to April, 1777, and until Burgoyne's surrender. Yale gave him an A.M. in 1784 and Harvard an honorary M.D. in 1811. He joined the Massachusetts Medical Society in 1785 and therefore was familiar with the parent society and its aims, in the first period, during the last years of the eighteenth century, before the temporary decadence had set in. Dr. Sergeant was reputed to be the most skilful operator of his time, and his services were in demand within a wide radius. Tall, erect and thin, his figure was a familiar sight in Stockbridge. He died in the town of his birth of pulmonary hemorrhage while sitting at table, November 14, 1814, at the age of seventy-two.

Hugo Burghardt of Richmond, who was born in Great Barrington in 1771 and was a graduate

of Yale, seems to have been an Apollo in his physical proportions. Dr. A. M. Smith quotes this of him: "tall, with a well-proportioned physical organization, erect and graceful in all his movements, he won the notice and admiration of all. Affable in his manners, his geniality threw a halo around his path and made him a most welcome visitor to scenes of suffering and sorrow. In discussion he was strictly logical, clear and convincing." Dr. Burghardt was a pupil of Dr. Sergeant. As a member of the militia he was wounded while opposing the followers of Daniel Shays in 1787, and in the War of 1812 he was a strong partisan for the government and sacrificed a large portion of his property in the cause. Previous to 1822 he was president of the Berkshire Medical Society, and he died October 18 of that year.

Not much is known about Remembrance Sheldon, except that he was born in 1759 and came to Williamstown in response to Shays' partisans and in opposition to Dr. William Towner, the chief physician of that place, who had incurred their displeasure. Dr. Sheldon practised there until his death in 1809.

Horatio Jones of Stockbridge was the son of Captain Josiah Jones of that town, and was born December 30, 1769. Pursuing his studies in Yale, his eyesight failed and he was obliged to give up. Then he took up the business of surveying, with the result that his eyesight and health were restored and he became a student with Dr. Sergeant. How much the pioneers did for medicine before the days of the schools, in instructing students and imbuing them with high ideals of professional attainments and conduct! For a time before beginning practice Dr. Jones was a druggist in Stockbridge. He be-

came a fellow of the Massachusetts Medical Society in 1804 and went to Philadelphia the next year to perfect himself in surgery. In 1810 Williams College conferred on him the honorary degree of A.M. He died in 1815, aged forty-six.

William Buel was a native of Litchfield, Connecticut. He practised in Sheffield for twenty years, and died in Litchfield in 1851, aged eighty-three.

Oliver Brewster of Becket, a lineal descendant of the Pilgrim William Brewster, was born at Lebanon, Connecticut, April 2, 1760. He was employed as a surgeon in Colonel John Brown's Pittsfield regiment and was stationed in the Mohawk valley. Returning to civil life he was said to be especially successful in the treatment of acute diseases. There is no doubt that he had a large practice and was charitable to the poor. He was a deacon of the church and very religious, and his taking off occurred while in attendance on a seriously ill lady. He had just remarked: "I know not what more we can do, but we must all pray for her, and pray for ourselves," when he was stricken with an apoplectic seizure and died six hours later, February 15, 1812.

Eldad Lewis of Lenox had a widespread reputation for eloquence, wherefore he became the first orator of the Berkshire Medical Society in 1787. We have had specimens of his oratory. He settled in Lenox as early as 1778, took an important part in town affairs, assisted in establishing the first town library, and published one of the earliest newspapers in the county, a political campaign sheet. He was a good classical scholar and a forceful writer and speaker besides being a successful practitioner. After liv-

ing in Lenox for over a quarter of a century, he moved to New York State, where he died.

This paper must close with these brief sketches of the founders. Enough has been said to show the sort of men they were,—idealists that one would expect to work for the bettering of medicine. How the Berkshire Medical Institution came to be organized in 1823 and fostered by Henry Halsey Childs for forty years, noted son of an eminent father, to rival and surpass the Fairfield Medical School of Western New York and the Castleton Medical College of Vermont, including in its faculty many of the eminent medical men of the time and during its life of forty-four years conferring the M.D. degree on 1120 students, must be left for another time. Then it will be interesting to study the troublous time of the Berkshire Society when its membership was small and it was hard to get the annual assessments paid, due to its great distance from the capital and the restricted facilities for travel, necessitating loss of the advantages that were enjoyed by the parent society and by the fellows who lived nearer, in the way of attending meetings and entertainments and the use of the library. Another grievance was the oppressive regulations of the boards of censors. The troubles came to a head April 20, 1831, when a petition asking for relief, signed by Henry Halsey Childs and forty others, was presented to a special meeting of the council. As a result of this petition censors were paid two dollars for each day's attendance upon the meetings of the board, and a rebate was made to the district society of one-third of the amount of the dues collected by the district treasurer, to be appropriated to the purchase of books for a district society library, and a loan was author-

ized of as many as sixty volumes from the library of the parent society. Thereafter began a period of rejuvenation. With the opening of the Boston and Albany Railroad transportation was improved; the membership increased and today numbers eighty-two fellows.

The Massachusetts Medical Society held its annual meeting in Pittsfield in 1852 and again in 1863, when Timothy Childs, son of Henry Halsey, was anniversary chairman. Franklin Kittredge Paddock of Pittsfield was president of the society in 1894-96, and successfully piloted it through much progressive legislation. Looking back over all the years, it is interesting to see how much is owed to the courage and fortitude of the pioneers who builded well for the coming generations by their unceasing labors for an ideal.

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